



[4310-13]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

Office of Commercial Space Transportation (AST); Notice of Availability of the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Launch and Reentry of SpaceShipTwo Reusable Suborbital Rockets at the Mojave Air and Space Port.

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), lead Federal agency and United States Air Force and National Aeronautics and Space Administration, cooperating agencies

ACTIONS: Notice of Availability of Final EA and FONSI

SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA; 42 United States Code § 4321 *et seq.*), Council on Environmental Quality NEPA implementing regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations parts 1500 to 1508), and FAA Order 1050.1E, Change 1, the FAA is announcing the availability of the Final EA and FONSI for the Launch and Reentry of SpaceShipTwo Reusable Suborbital Rockets at the Mojave Air and Space Port.

The Final EA was prepared to analyze the potential environmental impacts of issuing experimental permits and/or launch licenses to operate SpaceShipTwo reusable suborbital rockets and WhiteKnightTwo carrier aircraft at the Mojave Air and Space Port in

Mojave, California. Under the Proposed Action, the FAA would issue experimental permits and/or launch licenses to multiple operators for the operation of SpaceShipTwo and WhiteKnightTwo at the Mojave Air and Space Port. Both WhiteKnightTwo and SpaceShipTwo would be piloted during operations. The Mojave Air and Space Port comprises an area of approximately 3,000 acres in Kern County, California, and is east of the unincorporated town of Mojave. The Final EA addresses the potential environmental impacts of implementing the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative of not issuing an experimental permit and/or launch license for the operation of SpaceShipTwo and WhiteKnightTwo at the Mojave Air and Space Port.

The FAA has posted the Final EA and FONSI on the FAA/AST website:

http://www.faa.gov/about/office_org/headquarters_offices/ast/environmental/review/permits/. A paper copy of the Final EA and FONSI may be reviewed during regular business hours at the following locations:

Edwards AFB Base Library

95 SPTG/SVMG

5 West Yeager Blvd.

Building 2665

Edwards AFB, CA 93524-1295

Kern County Library

Boron Branch

26967 20 Mule Team Road

Boron, CA 93516

Kern County Library

California City Branch

9507 California City Boulevard

California City, CA 93505

Kern County Library

Kernville Branch

48 Tobias Street

Kernville, CA 93238

Kern County Library

Mojave Branch

16916-1/2 Highway 14

Mojave, CA 93501

Kern County Library

Ridgecrest Branch

131 East Las Flores Avenue

Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Kern County Library

Tehachapi Branch

450 West F Street

Tehachapi, CA 93561

Kern County Library

Wofford Heights Branch

6400-B Wofford Boulevard

Wofford Heights, CA 93285

Kern River Valley Library

7054 Lake Isabella Boulevard

Lake Isabella, CA 93240

Kern River Valley Library

Wanda Kirk Branch (Rosamond)

3611 Rosamond Boulevard

Rosamond, CA 93560

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Under the Proposed Action, the FAA would issue experimental permits and/or launch licenses for the operation of SpaceShipTwo and WhiteKnightTwo at the Mojave Air and Space Port in Mojave, CA. The Proposed Action does not include any construction activities. The Mojave Air and Space Port's existing infrastructure would be used for takeoff and landing activities. Experimental permits would be valid for one year. Launch licenses would be valid for two years. The

FAA could renew experimental permits and launch licenses if requested, in writing, by the permittees at least 60 days before the permit expires, and/or by the licensees at least 90 days before the license expires. The Final EA assumes that the FAA could issue either new or renewed experimental permits and/or launch licenses. For purposes of analyzing environmental impacts in the Final EA, the FAA developed a conservative set of assumptions regarding the possible number of launches and reentries that could be conducted under any one experimental permit and/or launch license for the SpaceShipTwo at the Mojave Air and Space Port. The FAA has assumed a maximum of up to 30 total launches and reentries per year of SpaceShipTwo for a total of up to 150 launches and reentries of SpaceShipTwo between 2012 and 2016. This estimation is a conservative number and considers potential multiple launches per day and potential launch aborts.

The only alternative to the Proposed Action analyzed in the Final EA is the No Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, the FAA would not issue experimental permits and/or launch licenses for the operation of SpaceShipTwo and WhiteKnightTwo from the Mojave Air and Space Port. Existing operations at Mojave Air and Space Port would continue.

The resource areas considered in the Final EA include air quality; biological resources (including fish, wildlife, and plants); historical, architectural, archaeological, and cultural resources; hazardous materials, pollution prevention, and solid waste; health and safety; land use (including Department of Transportation Section 4(f) properties); light emissions

and visual resources; noise and compatible land use; socioeconomic resources, environmental justice, and children's environmental health and safety; and cumulative impacts.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Daniel Czelusniak,
Environmental Program Lead, Office of Commercial Space Transportation, Federal
Aviation Administration, 800 Independence Avenue SW, Room 325, Washington, DC
20591; email Daniel.Czelusniak@faa.gov; or phone (202) 267-5924;.

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Mr. Michael McElligott

Manager, Space Transportation Development Division

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